

## **The Impact of Experiential Marketing on the Intention to Revisit the Brand: A Study on Fast-Food Restaurants**

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# **THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING ON THE INTENTION TO REVISIT THE BRAND: A STUDY ON FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

All forms of business can provide experiences, bearing in mind that the economy is evolving into the era of experiences. Consequently, nowadays, researchers and marketers must use the experiential view of the consumption of different products to support the traditional model-oriented approach to decision-making (Farias et al., 2014).

In the service sector (such as tourism and restaurants), experiences receive an extra focus in the marketing context for as the nature of the business allows, thus marketers can have a dialogue with customers and provide personal experiences directly (Amin & Tarun, 2019).

To satisfy customers in these sectors, it is necessary to create the first memorable, pleasant, caring, and sometimes extraordinary experience. Therefore, marketers and researchers' challenge is to identify which experiences can leave the most favourable impression on customers and encourage them to develop a positive attitude and behaviour towards the brand (Amin & Tarun, 2019).

In Portugal the activity sector that encompasses accommodation and restaurants stood out as those that showed the most significant growth in 2017 in most economic indicators, showing increases of 16.5% in turnover and 20.4% in gross value added (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2017). However, in 2020 the world pandemic context caused the Portuguese accommodation and restaurants sector the greatest reduction in business volume (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2020).

That said, this study's general objective is to investigate the impact of experiential marketing on the consumer's intention to revisit the brand, evaluating each stage of their perception process in the experiences of eating out of the home. Thus, and in response to the general objective, the specific objectives of the present study are: (1) to examine if the different types of experiences lived in eating out of the home are positively related to the experiential value; (2) to verify if the quality perception of the service is positively related to the experiential value; (3) to analyse if the experiential value is positively related to customer satisfaction; (4) to verify if customer satisfaction is positively related to the intention to revisit; and (5) to verify if there are significant differences in the relationships mentioned in the previous objectives, when inherent to a food experience in a restaurant belonging to a large global chain (LC) versus those that are stand-alone or belong to a small chain (SC).

This study aims to strengthen the restaurant's sector by providing managers with an experiential marketing approach. Moreover, since experiences are supposedly different when comparing a fast-food experience between a large chain and a small chain restaurant, the present study discusses which dimensions of experience marketing have a higher impact on each restaurant type. Furthermore, since data were collected during the pandemic period, results provide managerial support, particularly in the face of the most critical moment that the sector is experiencing in the last decades.

For it, a model already tested in other contexts was applied in Portugal for the restaurant's sector, although, adapted for this specific investigation. However, it is noteworthy that no study has been identified in the literature so far that analyses these relationships evidenced in the applied model, verifying whether there were statistically significant differences between the respondents' responses, depending on the group belonging to the service in question. In this way, this study can serve as a basis for future studies on the possible differences that may occur in the strategic experiential modules and in the service quality perception, which will affect and differentiate the remaining relationships between variables, when the model is applied to a service belonging to different groups.

## 2. LITERATURE REVISION

### 2.1. Experiential Marketing

In 1998, Pine and Gilmore exposed the concept of experience from an economic perspective, thus giving rise to the term experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). As an effect, the concept of experience has been analysed by several sciences, including marketing.

In this purpose, experiences are considered individual events that are not self-managed by the consumer, but that occurs in response to stimuli and involve the whole being (Schmitt, 1999). Thus, from a consumer perspective, experiences should be pleasant, engaging and memorable encounters for those who consume these events (Oh et al., 2007). In this way, an experience can be seen as "*the means to orchestrate all the clues that people detect in the purchase process*" (Berry et al., 2002, p.1), given that the experience it is considered as the object - material or immaterial - to be consumed itself (Pereira et al., 2015). This perspective moves the economy of experience, including leisure activities, games and distractions aimed at creating bonds, emotions, sensations and affections (Lipovetsky, 2010).

Hence, and as a consequence of the importance that experience began to gain in organisations, Schmitt (1999) states that just as traditional marketing is a response to the industrial era, experiential marketing is a response but for development in the business environment (Schmitt, 1999).

After the transition from traditional marketing to experiential marketing, several authors provided their understanding of this paradigm, considered the "new paradigm" until the 1980s. In this context, experiential marketing is seen as memory or memorable experience embedded in the client's mind (Lee & Chang, 2012). On the other hand, other authors consider that this concept's emergence reflects the change in the communication paradigm. Seeing that, marketers try to attract consumers by creating experiences that result from an increasingly personalised communication, through discourse and actions, because consumers require attention (Amin & Tarun, 2019).

Experiential marketing is based on the five different types of experiences, also known as the strategic experiential modules that marketers can produce to satisfy consumer needs, namely: **sense, feel, think, act and relate** (Schmitt, 1999). As a result, other authors have joined this approach to the five different types of experiences inherent in the product.

Starting with the sense perception, it appeals to the senses to create sensory experiences, through sight, sound, touch, taste and smell (McCole, 2004; Schmitt, 1999)

The feel perception appeals to the customers' inner feelings and emotions, with the purpose of creating affective experiences; most of the affection is conceived during consumption, ranging from slightly positive moods linked to one or more brands, to even strong emotions of joy and pride (Schmitt, 1999; Yang & He, 2011; Yuan & Wu, 2008).

In its turn, the think perception emphasises consumer intelligence in generating the cognitive experience; by appealing to the intellect, it solves problems and despairs customers in a creative way (Schmitt, 1999).

Concerning the act perception, this module aims to affect body experiences, lifestyles, and interactions and enriches customers' lives by increasing their physical experiences and showing uneven ways of doing things, alternative lifestyles, and interactions. Besides, lifestyle changes are usually of a more spontaneous, motivating and inspiring nature and present personalities based on an imitation model, for example, singers or actors, sportsmen, among others (Chu & Lee, 2007; Schmitt, 1999).

Finally, and regarding the relative perception, it expands beyond the individual's own personal feelings, relating it to something outside his private state. In turn, the campaigns inherent in "relating" appeal to the individual's desire to improve themselves, and in this way, these

campaigns call attention to the need for individuals to be perceived positively by other people and therefore approaching the individual to a broader social system (a subculture or a country) (Schmitt, 1999).

These five different modules of experiences can be found in various studies in the literature, that used them to analyse services, particularly in the restaurants and hospitality sector (Lee et al., 2008; Lee & Chang, 2012; Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Pham & Huang, 2015; Wu & Tseng, 2014; Yuan & Wu, 2008).

## 2.2. Experiential Value

As Pine & Gilmore (1999) refer, experiential marketing is based on the view that currently what people want are not products, but experiences that the products allow to achieve. Therefore, the better the experience, the better the perception of value can be (Boztepe, 2007), or in the field of experiences, what can be designated as experiential value (Schmitt, 1999; Yuan & Wu, 2008). In this sense, some authors define experiential value as emotional and functional values, which are the experiential value components (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008).

Sheth et al. (1991) define the functional value as the perceived utility acquired from the capacity of an alternative of functional, utilitarian, or physical performance. An option reaches functional value due to the possession of important functional, utilitarian or physical attributes, and functional value can be measured in a profile of choice attributes (Sheth et al., 1991). In this context, the functional value can also be described as the cognitive or financial reward that the consumer gains from the product or service, (Yuan & Wu, 2008), what can be measured by research through factors such as effectiveness, shopping convenience and price satisfaction (Mathwick et al., 2001).

On the other hand, emotional value is defined as the perceived utility gained from an alternative to awaken feelings or affective states, during and after an experience. An option acquires emotional value when associated with certain feelings or when it precipitates or perpetuates those feelings; the emotional value can be measured in a profile of emotions related to the alternative choice (Sheth et al., 1991). Products, businesses and brands in which pleasure, tranquillity, and good feeling are factors that are investigated to measure emotional value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

In the literature, several studies show a relationship between experiential value and experiential marketing. As an effect, when deepening the theme, it is suggested that experiential marketing should offer an emotional and functional value to the client (Schmitt, 1999; Berry et al., 2002). Indeed, this argument overlapped each type of experiential marketing from the product perspective (Schmitt, 1999).

Considering what has been explored in terms of the literature, several studies have proven a positive association between experiential marketing and experiential value (Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Pham & Huang, 2015; Yuan & Wu, 2008). As a result, and based on Nadiri & Gunay (2013) study, ten hypotheses were developed that will be used in this study to test the relationship between experiential marketing and experiential value (see Table 1, H1 to H10).

**Table 1: Summary of hypotheses under analysis.**

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Supporting studies</b>
H1: Sense perception is positively related to emotional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)
H2: Sense perception is positively related to functional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012)
H3: Feel perception is positively related to emotional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008)
H4: Feel perception is positively related to functional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Pham & Huang, 2015)
H5: Think perception is positively related to emotional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Pham & Huang, 2015; Yuan & Wu, 2008)
H6: Think perception is positively related to functional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Pham & Huang, 2015; Yuan & Wu, 2008)
H7: Act perception is positively related to emotional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)
H8: Act perception is positively related to functional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)
H9: Relate perception is positively related to emotional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)
H10: Relate perception is positively related to functional value	(Maghnati et al., 2012; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)
H11: Service quality is positively related to emotional value	(Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008)
H12: Service quality is positively related to functional value	(Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008)
H13: Emotional value is positively related to customer satisfaction	(Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Rezaei et al., 2016; Wu & Liang, 2009)
H14: Functional value is positively related to customer satisfaction	(Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Rezaei et al., 2016; Wu & Liang, 2009)
H15: Customer satisfaction is positively related to the intention to revisit	(Nadiri & Gunay, 2013)

**Source:** *The authors, based on the literature review.*

Although many internal and external factors affect the perception of service quality, these factors cannot be understood equally for all consumers because the perception of service quality is subjective and depends on customers' individual experiences with the service being offered come across (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013).

Additionally, distinguished researchers reported that the quality of service positively affects the customer's experiential value (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008). In other words, different levels of service quality lead to various assessments. Therefore, service quality is also an essential factor in influencing the value that customers attribute to services (Chen & Hu, 2010; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2004).

Therefore, two hypotheses based on the study by Nadiri & Gunay (2013) are proposed for this investigation to test the relationship between service quality and experiential value, as shown in Table 1 (see H11 to H12).

### 2.3. Consumer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a worthy goal of exploration by the marketing society, since a satisfied customer is convinced that a particular service's purchase was a good deal, which simplifies the

hypothesis of a continuity relationship between the customer and an organisation. In this way, consumer satisfaction is referred to as the total assessment of performance based on all previous experiences (positive and negative) with the company (Jones et al., 2000).

However, and despite in the literature includes significant distinctions in the definition of satisfaction, all definitions share three components in common: 1) consumer satisfaction is an answer (emotional or cognitive); 2) the solution belongs to a specific focus (expectations, product, consumer experience, etc.); and 3) the answer occurs at a particular moment (after consumption, after choice, based on accumulated experience, etc.) (Giese & Cote, 2000).

As a result, several studies focus on the second component, specifically on expectations, proposing expectation as an antecedent to consumer satisfaction and future behaviour (Rodríguez del Bosque et al., 2006).

In this sense, when the product or service's actual performance exceeds the consumer's expectation, it means that there is a positive difference or greater satisfaction. On the contrary, the negative difference or dissatisfaction occurs when the real performance is not as expected (Luo et al., 2018). Consequently, customer expectations can have a different impact on the formation of satisfaction in specific contexts (Rodríguez del Bosque et al., 2006).

Therefore, customer satisfaction is considered a critical factor in the assessment of organisational performance. Thus, companies try to increase customer satisfaction to ensure a competitive advantage, assuming that implementing customer evaluation produces better organisational results (Martínez et al., 2011).

Another aspect related to consumer satisfaction is precisely its connection with the experiential value. Many studies report that experiential value directly and positively affects customer satisfaction, which means that customers with high experiential value tend to make positive satisfaction assessments (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Rezaei et al., 2016; Wu & Liang, 2009).

To test the relationship between customer satisfaction and the experiential value, two hypotheses are proposed (H13 and H14), as shown in Table 1.

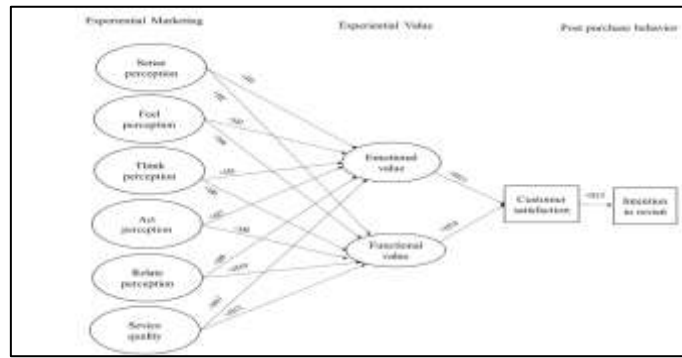
Moreover, purchase intention is a concept that refers to the degree of perceptual conviction of a customer to repurchase a particular product (good or service) or to repurchase any product (good or service) at a specific organisation. Therefore, when customers realise that they have made a right choice and that the product has met their needs and desires, with the service they expected, this leads to a positive impact on consumers' future purchase intention. In other words, any dissatisfaction in any of the determinants of customer satisfaction can reduce customers' future purchase intention (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013).

As a result, service companies should try to understand if their customers are not satisfied so to apply appropriate measures to improve the service quality and increase their sales (David & Bojanic, 2010), since more than 90% of dissatisfied customers never return (Sulek & Hensley, 2004).

That said, some studies in the food and beverage sector indicate that customer satisfaction is an essential predictor of the customer's intention to revisit (Oh, 2000; Weiss et al., 2005). Consequently, satisfaction proved to be a reliable predictor of the intention to revisit (Hui et al., 2007; Jang & Feng, 2007; Kim et al., 2009). In this sense, a final hypothesis based on the study by Nadiri & Gunay (2013) was developed to test the relationship between customer satisfaction and the intention to revisit, which will be used in this investigation, namely H15, as shown in Table 1.

Figure 1 summarises the hypotheses proposed for this study.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework of proposed hypotheses.



*Source:* The authors, based on the literature review.

### 3. EMPIRICAL STUDY

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

A survey was applied in July-August of 2020 to a Portuguese sample, aged 15 or over and hamburger consumer in fast-food restaurants. The questionnaire contained two parts: the first one encompassing questions related to constructs, and the second one, including some demographic questions. The constructs were measured through statements (items) evaluated by respondents through a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Experiential marketing was evaluated through its five components and, added to the quality perception items, resulted in 23 statements (Berry et al., 1988; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Schmitt, 1999). The experiential value was evaluated through 6 statements (Mathwick et al., 2001; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Customer satisfaction and intention to revisit were collected based on one statement each (Oliver & Swan, 1989).

All items' statements went through the translation and back-translation process to Portuguese to guarantee respondents' full comprehension. Before the survey was released, a pre-test was carried out, in which ten individuals were inquired to detect possible flaws in its execution.

The survey was disseminated online, mainly because the data were collected during the pandemic period, making it safer for respondents to answer by this means. Despite the pandemic situation, in the summer of 2020 the virus transmission rate was under control in Portugal, allowing the restrictions rules to be somehow relaxed. However, to ensure that the data collection represented real and recent experiences, a filter question was applied so that only people who had hamburgers in a fast-food restaurant in the last two weeks would be part of the sample. After eliminating the questionnaires that did not fit the target population and the filter criteria, the final sample resulted in 442 people.

Data were then analysed through Structural Equation Modelling, using a Partial Least Squares method in the SmartPls3 statistical software.

#### 3.2. Characteristics of Respondents

The total sample can be divided into respondents who had the most recent experience in large restaurant chains ( $n_{LC} = 269$ ) and small restaurant chains ( $n_{SC} = 173$ ). Table 2 shows a summary of the respondents' characteristics.

The demographic analysis revealed that in large restaurant chains women have a greater weight in the sample, namely 57.2%. Conversely, in small restaurant chains men have a greater weight in the sample, namely 54.3%.

Regarding the age group, it was observed that in LC the age groups with the highest weight were the youngest age groups (from 15 to 39 years old), on the contrary, the age groups older than the previous ones obtained a lower weight in the sample (from 40 to 65 or more years). On the other hand, with regard to SC, it was observed that the age groups with the greatest weight in the sample were the age groups from 20 to 49 years old, on the contrary, the age groups from 15 to 19 years old, and from 50 to 65 or more years old, had a lower weight.

On the other hand, and in reference to the level of education of the respondents, it was analysed that 41.6% of the respondents mentioned that concerning their academic qualifications they had completed secondary education or professional course, 27.4% had completed their graduation degree, 11.3% had completed basic education, and lastly, 19.7% of respondents had completed either a postgraduate degree, or a master's or a doctorate. Similarly, the same happened in the sample when distributed to large restaurant chains and small restaurant chains.

Lastly, with regard to the respondents' professional situation, it was found that 55.2% of respondents mentioned be employed, 20.1% of respondents were studying, 11.3% of respondents were unemployed, 7, 7% of respondents said they were self-employed and, finally, 5.7% of respondents were student worker. Similarly, the same happened in the sample when distributed to large restaurant chains and small restaurant chains.

**Table 2:** Summary of demographic information (distribution in percentage).

Variable		Total (442)	LC (269)	SC (173)
<b>Gender</b>	women	52.7	57.2	45.7
	men	47.3	42.8	54.3
<b>Age Group</b>	15-19	8.4	11.9	2.9
	20-29	47.8	56.5	34.1
	30-39	15.8	16.0	15.7
	40-49	11.5	5.9	20.2
	50-59	9.7	6.7	14.4
	60 or more	6.8	3.0	12.7
<b>Education</b>	Basic	11.3	7.4	17.3
	Second / professional	41.6	41.8	41.4
	Graduation degree	27.4	31.6	20.9
	Postgrad. / Masters / PhD	19.7	19.2	20.4
<b>Professional situation</b>	Self-employed	7.7	5.9	10.4
	Employee	55.2	49.4	64.2
	Unemployed	11.3	14.9	5.8
	Student	20.1	23.0	15.6
	Student worker	5.7	6.7	4.0

*Source: The authors.*

### 3.3. Structural Equation Modelling

Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) is a general multivariate statistical modeling procedure. SEM needs that the measures used by the researcher be of good psychometric quality and that access to solid theoretical models based on previous research be ensured in order to enable the researcher to establish these impositions (predefined relationships) with property. As a result of this last characteristic, SEM is understood as a confirmatory technique, given that the theoretical modeling of what is under investigation must have occurred before the data analysis (Pereira et al., 2019). Thus, it was decided to use this procedure, since the conceptual model of this



investigation is a confirmatory model, that is, it has already been tested and validated by other researchers.

### 3.3.1. Assessment of the Measurement Model

When evaluating the measurement model, a discriminating validity issue was faced, since for the affective experience and the sensorial experience the square roots of the AVEs are not greater than the correlations of the constructs, as they should be (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this sense, for the sense perception and the feel perception, it was necessary to eliminate the variable observed with the lowest factor load (Bido & Silva, 2019), namely, the variable S5 and F3 respectively, since these were the only ones that held of factorial loads below 0.7 (Table 3) (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4 shows the analyses regarding convergent validity, internal consistency, and discriminant validity after due adjustments. Thus, from the results achieved, and inherent to the convergent validity, it was found that all the values of the AVEs were greater than 0.5; therefore, it was admitted that the model converged to a satisfactory result (Henseler et al., 2009).

Besides, and concerning internal consistency analysis, it was confirmed that all values of composite reliability (CR) were greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Finally, it was found that all the square roots of the AVEs were greater than the correlations of the constructs; therefore, it is confirmed that there is discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

**Table 3:** Items and factorial loadings.

Construct	Item (observable variable)	Factorial load
Sense perception	S1 - The material associated with the service (such as pamphlets and menu boards) visually appeals and draws attention.	0.827
	S2 - The decor is visually attractive and draws attention.	0.890
	S3 - The establishment emanates a pleasant and exciting smell.	0.800
	S4 - The taste of the delivered products corresponds to my expectations.	0.863
	S5 - The products delivered are fresh.	<b>0.617</b>
	S6 - The containers in which the products are delivered are clean and practical.	0.825
Feel perception	F1 - The establishment has relaxing and intimate atmosphere.	0.901
	F2 - During my conversation with the employees I feel that they pay attention to my expectations.	0.917
	F3 - I feel comfortable and happy to frequent this establishment.	<b>0.508</b>
Think perception	T1 - The brand organizes different activities that catch my attention.	0.827
	T2 - There are offline communication channels (printed, visual) that allow me to follow the news daily.	0.696
	T3 - I follow the latest news about the brand through its website.	0.894
	T4 - I follow the news released by the media about the brand.	0.894
Act perception	A1 - This space tries to make me think about the lifestyle.	0.856
	A2 - This space tries to remind me of the activities that I can do.	0.942
	A3 - This space makes me think about my behavior.	0.919
Relate perception	R1 - Attending this establishment helps me to develop a relationship with my social environment.	0.863
	R2 - Friends with whom to share the social environment prefer this establishment, this makes me prefer it too.	0.908
	R3 - Attending this establishment fits into the social class to which I belong.	0.887
	R4 - In this establishment I feel that I am in the right place, where I should be.	0.884
Service quality	Q1 - This restaurant provides its services when it promises to do so.	0.910
	Q2 - The staff at this restaurant make a point of fully understanding what I want.	0.932
	Q3 - I feel safe in my transactions with this restaurant.	0.903
Emotional value	EV1 - I like being at this establishment.	0.925
	EV2 - This establishment makes me feel good.	0.942
	EV3 - This establishment and its services make you want to come back.	0.923
Functional value	FV1 - The products offered by the establishment are reasonably priced.	0.872
	FV2 - In this establishment I receive a good price / quality proposal for the products.	0.942
	FV3 - This establishment is economical.	0.925
Consumer satisfaction	SAT1 - Taking everything into account, the service of the establishment meets my expectations.	1.000
Intention to revisit	IT1 - The next time I plan on eating out, I will be returning to this restaurant.	1.000

*Source: The authors.*

**Table 4:** Convergent validity, internal Consistency and Discriminant Validity, after adjusting the general model.

Construct	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1- Sense	0.708	0.924	0.842									
2- Feel	0.827	0.905	0.835	0.909								
3- Think	0.692	0.899	0.473	0.499	0.832							
4- Act	0.822	0.933	0.563	0.652	0.729	0.907						
5- Relate	0.784	0.936	0.696	0.820	0.512	0.716	0.886					
6- Service quality	0.838	0.939	0.808	0.836	0.488	0.573	0.690	0.915				
7- Emotional value	0.865	0.950	0.745	0.812	0.425	0.557	0.839	0.747	0.930			
8- Functional value	0.834	0.938	0.781	0.780	0.453	0.514	0.637	0.869	0.758	0.913		
9- Cust. satisfaction	1.000	1.000	0.769	0.801	0.452	0.543	0.710	0.853	0.793	0.824	1.000	
10- Intent. to revisit	1.000	1.000	0.696	0.758	0.470	0.599	0.764	0.747	0.791	0.729	0.789	1.000

*Source: The authors.*

### 3.3.2. Assessment of the Structural Model

From the PLS Algorithm analysis, it was found that from excluding items with factorial loads below the reference value, the model proved to be adjusted after its new reprocessing, because the SRMR value presented was 0.068. Therefore, this value was admitted to ensure the model's adjustment, as this index was less than 0.08 (Henseler, Hubona, et al., 2016). In turn, the value of the NFI indicator also showed a good fit of the model, given that its value was greater than 0.09 (Jan-Bernd Lohmoller, 1989). Finally, the Rms Theta indicator was not less than 0.12, but it came close to it (Henseler et al., 2014) (Table 5).

Regarding the VIF values, it was confirmed that only hypotheses 3 and 4 had a VIF value above 5; these values should not be accepted, given that it indicates multicollinearity between variables (in this case, between feel perception and emotional value, and between feel perception and functional value) (Hair et al., 2019). However, the latent variable feel perception was maintained, since it is a structural model that has already been confirmed. It was decided to be faithful to the original model to be feasible to test all hypotheses (Table 6).

After that, the Bootstrapping analysis was executed to analyse the structural coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and their respective p-values. As an effect, Table 6 proved that the hypotheses H1, H2, H9, H11, H12, H13, H14 and H15, were supported since they presented a p-value  $\leq 0.05$ . The same did not happen with the hypotheses, H3, H4, H5, H6, H8 and H10, which were rejected since they presented a p-value higher than 0.05. In turn, despite H7 has shown a small p-value, it was still left since this hypothesis proposed a negative relationship between the act perception and the emotional value, contrary to the proposed investigation hypothesis, in which it was wanted to prove a positive relationship between the act perception and the emotional value.

**Table 5:** Model Fit.

	Estimated model	Evaluation criteria	Authors
<b>SRMR</b>	0.068	<0.08	(Henseler, Hubona, et al., 2016)
<b>NFI</b>	0.901	>0.09	(Jan-Bernd Lohmoller, 1989)
<b>Rms Theta</b>	0.133	<0.12	(Henseler et al., 2014)

*Source: The author.*

**Table 6:** Results of the structural model.

	VIF	f <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	p-value	conclusion
<b>Effect on emotional value (R<sup>2</sup> 0.783)</b>					
H1. Sense	3.835	0.024	0.141	0.014	<b>supported</b>
H3. Feel	6.334	0.015	0.146	0.086	rejected
H5. Think	2.203	0.000	0.001	0.993	rejected
H7. Act	3.265	0.035	-0.158	0.001	rejected
H9. Relate	3.717	0.461	0.610	0.000	<b>supported</b>
H11. Service quality	3.893	0.038	0.180	0.008	<b>supported</b>
<b>Effect on functional value (R<sup>2</sup> 0.776)</b>					
H2. Sense	3.835	0.041	0.187	0.004	<b>supported</b>
H4. Feel	6.334	0.007	0.099	0.291	rejected
H6. Think	2.203	0.003	0.041	0.271	rejected
H8. Act	3.265	0.004	-0.056	0.232	rejected
H10. Relate	3.717	0.000	-0.003	0.971	rejected
H12. Service quality	3.893	0.483	0.649	0.000	<b>supported</b>
<b>Effect on consumer satisfaction (R<sup>2</sup> 0.746)</b>					
H13. Emotional value	2.347	0.262	0.395	0.000	<b>supported</b>
H14. Functional value	2.347	0.463	0.545	0.000	<b>supported</b>

Effect on intention to revisit ( $R^2$ 0.623)					
H15. Consumer satisfaction	1.000	1.650	0.789	0.000	<b>supported</b>

*Source: The author.*

### 3.3.3 Multigroup Analysis

This analysis was realised to respond to the fifth specific objective of this study. Thus, two distinct groups were defined in SmartPLS3, namely, large restaurant chains ( $n_{LC} = 269$ ) and small restaurant chains ( $n_{SC} = 173$ ). The LC group includes the global chains and restaurants that own more than five establishments spread across the country; in turn, the SC group includes small restaurant chains with less than five establishments or even stand-alone ones.

Thus, the permutation made showed that the first two stages of the MICOM processing were respected because the configurational invariance was ensured from the early stage, by using the same indicators to measure the same constructs in the different groups (Bido & Silva, 2019). Besides, step 2, inherent to the compositional invariance, was also respected, since the correlation between the scores for each construct was equal to 1, when using the factor weights of group 1 and group 2, as shown in Table 7. Thus, it can be said that there is at least a partial measurement invariance (Henseler, Ringle, et al., 2016).

Concerning the third stage of MICOM processing, it was found through Table 7 that most of the average values and variances between the constructs of the first and second groups were not found between the respective confidence intervals (Eberl, 2010). Therefore, it is recommended that researchers do a moderation analysis to respond to structural differences in the relationships of the corresponding model (Henseler, Ringle, et al., 2016).

**Table 7:** MICOM procedure steps 2 and 3.

Construct	Step 2			Step 3					
	Correl. mean	Permutation		Mean – Orig. diff			Variance – Orig. diff		
		5.0%	permut. p-values	LC-SC	2.5%	97.5%	LS-SC	2.5%	97.5%
Sense	1.000	0.999	0.211	<b>-0.554</b>	-0.190	0.201	0.536	<b>-0.294</b>	<b>0.308</b>
Feel	1.000	0.999	0.821	<b>-0.729</b>	-0.207	0.193	<b>0.663</b>	-0.248	0.271
Think	0.999	0.996	0.273	0.098	-0.191	0.198	-0.062	-0.159	0.175
Act	1.000	0.999	0.056	<b>-0.236</b>	-0.182	0.188	0.037	-0.160	0.172
Relate	1.000	1.000	0.993	<b>-0.651</b>	-0.200	0.186	<b>0.378</b>	-0.199	0.215
Service quality	1.000	1.000	0.457	<b>-0.548</b>	-0.194	0.185	<b>0.725</b>	-0.284	0.308
Emotional value	1.000	1.000	0.256	<b>-0.535</b>	-0.197	0.183	<b>0.518</b>	-0.277	0.328
Functional value	1.000	1.000	0.816	<b>-0.420</b>	-0.205	0.184	<b>0.624</b>	-0.337	0.350
Consumer satisfaction	1.000	1.000	0.209	<b>-0.446</b>	-0.205	0.194	<b>0.498</b>	-0.309	0.331
Intention to revisit	1.000	1.000	0.087	<b>-0.580</b>	-0.205	0.198	<b>0.679</b>	-0.233	0.275

*Source: The authors.*

Therefore, the restaurant chain was used as a categorical moderator variable in the multigroup analysis. Before proceeding to the results, it should be noted that the measurement model assessment carried out for the two models separately did not show any statistically significant difference at the convergency analysis (AVE values) and the internal consistency analysis (CR values); indeed, their values are acceptable in terms of validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009; Marôco, 2018).

That said, we proceed to assess structural coefficients, where it was observed that these showed quite different values, when referring to an LC and an SC (Table 8). From these statistically

significant differences, it can be concluded that in LC, the act perception had a higher negative impact on emotional value, when compared with the negative impact observed in SC. On the other hand, the LC demonstrated that the act perception had a negative impact on the functional value. In contrast, in the SC the opposite occurred, that is, the act perception had a positive impact on the functional value.

In continuation, it was found that the impact of emotional value on consumer satisfaction was positive in both types of restaurant chains but was higher in SC compared to LC. In contrast, it was found that the impact of functional value on consumer satisfaction was equally positive in both types of restaurant chains, but less in SC compared to LC. In its turn, it was found that the impact of consumer satisfaction in the intention to revisit was positive in both types of restaurant chains but higher in SC compared to LC (Table 8).

Ultimately, the Bootstrapping technique was performed, analysed separately for the different groups, reaching the structural coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and their respective p-values.

As an effect, and inherent to LC, Table 9 proved that the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H9, H12, H13, H14 and H15, were supported since they presented a p-value  $\leq 0.05$ . The same did not happen with hypotheses H4, H5, H6, H10, H11, since were rejected because they presented a p-value  $> 0.05$ . In turn, and the case of hypotheses 7 and 8, despite presenting a p-value  $\leq 0.05$ , were nevertheless rejected, given that they presented a negative relationship between the act perception and the experiential value, contrary to the proposed research hypothesis in which one wanted to prove a positive relationship between the act perception and experiential value.

Besides, and referring to SC, Table 9 proved that H2, H9, H11, H12, H13, H14 and H15, were supported since they presented a p-value  $\leq 0.05$ . The same did not happen with H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H10 since they were rejected because they presented a p-value  $> 0.05$ .

**Table 8:** Differences between structural coefficients, large chains versus small chains.

Relations in study	Hyp	Structural coefficients		Struct diff coefficients	
		LC	SC	LC-SC	permut. p-values
Sense perception → emotion value	H1	0.189	0.069	0.120	0.334
Sense perception → functional value	H2	0.159	0.252	-0.093	0.493
Feel perception → emotion value	H3	0.180	0.096	0.085	0.625
Feel perception → functional value	H4	0.111	0.169	-0.057	0.787
Think perception → emotional value	H5	-0.040	-0.019	-0.020	0.771
Think perception → functional value	H6	0.057	-0.059	0.116	0.771
Act perception → emotional value	H7	-0.253	-0.048	-0.205	<b>0.037</b>
Act perception → functional value	H8	-0.165	0.132	-0.297	<b>0.003</b>
Relate perception → emotional value	H9	0.683	0.459	0.224	0.101
Relate perception → functional value	H10	0.090	-0.161	0.251	0.091
Service quality → emotional value	H11	0.145	0.388	-0.243	0.071
Service quality → functional value	H12	0.663	0.575	0.088	0.576
Emotional value → Customer satisfaction	H13	0.281	0.675	-0.394	<b>0.005</b>
Functional value → Customer satisfaction	H14	0.620	0.278	0.342	<b>0.007</b>
Customer satisfaction → Intention to revisit	H15	0.743	0.875	-0.132	<b>0.015</b>

**Source:** The authors.

**Table 9:** Results of structural models, large chains versus small chains.

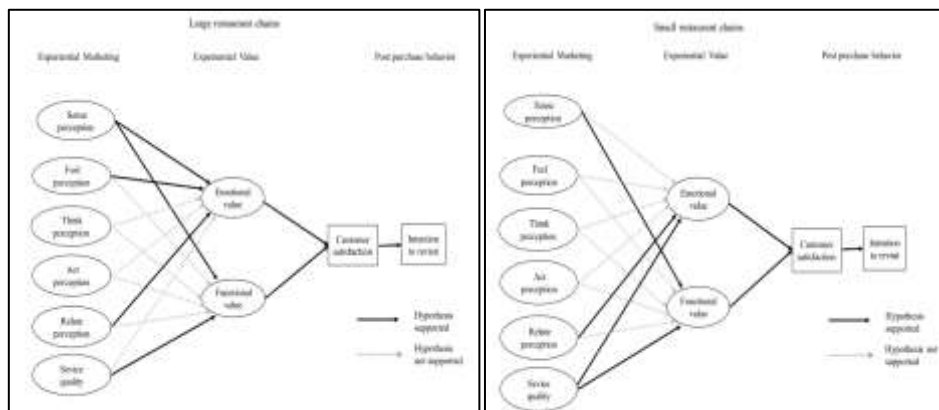
	LC			SC			
	$\beta$	p-value	conclusion	$\beta$	p-value	conclusion	
<b>Effect on emotional value</b>		(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.775)			(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.807)		
H1. Sense	<b>0.189</b>	<b>0.011</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.069	0.439	Rejected	
H3. Feel	<b>0.180</b>	<b>0.039</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.096	0.587	Rejected	
H5. Think	-0.040	0.384	Rejected	-0.019	0.687	Rejected	
H7. Act	-0.253	0.000	Rejected	-0.048	0.467	Rejected	
H9. Relate	<b>0.683</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.459</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
H11. Service quality	0.145	0.092	Rejected	<b>0.388</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
<b>Effect on functional value</b>		(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.781)			(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.766)		
H2. Sense	<b>0.159</b>	<b>0.030</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.022</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
H4. Feel	0.111	0.320	Rejected	0.169	0.302	Rejected	
H6. Think	0.057	0.308	Rejected	-0.059	0.272	Rejected	
H8. Act	-0.165	0.019	Rejected	0.132	0.067	Rejected	
H10. Relate	0.090	0.305	Rejected	-0.161	0.230	Rejected	
H12. Service quality	<b>0.663</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.575</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
<b>Effect on Customer satisfaction</b>		(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.723)			(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.814)		
H13. Emotional value	<b>0.281</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.675</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
H14. Functional value	<b>0.620</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.278</b>	<b>0.002</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
<b>Effect on intention to revisit</b>		(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.552)			(R <sup>2</sup> = 0.765)		
H15. Customer satisfaction	<b>0.743</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>0.875</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>	

Source: The authors.

#### 4. RESULTS DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The similarities and differences in the structural path results impose some interpretation from an empirical point of view. Starting by the similarities, it was found that the statistically common relationships to the two models (large chains versus small chains) were as follows: the sense perception with the functional value, the relate perception with the emotional value, the quality of the service with functional value, experiential value with consumer satisfaction, and consumer satisfaction with the intention to revisit (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** Comparison of results between the two structural models, large chains versus small chains.



Source: The authors, through SmartPLS3.

As a result of these similarities, it is considered that restaurant establishments can achieve greater consumer satisfaction through the experiential values they create, thus improving their experiential marketing efforts, these results being consistent with the literature (Cedric & Liang, 2009; Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Rezaei et al., 2016; Yuan & Wu, 2008). In turn, it is believed that when customers realise that they have made a good choice and that the product has met their needs and wants, with the service they expected, this leads to a positive impact on consumers' future purchase intention (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013).

On the other hand, regarding the differences, it was found that although the functional value was positive in both types of restaurant chains, and higher in the LC compared to the SC, in the end, it was the SC that obtained an intention to revisit higher compared to the LC. It can be assumed that such an occurrence was due to the fact that in this study, the emotional value has shown a higher weight compared to the functional value in consumer satisfaction, and consequently, this "weighing" more when choosing a restaurant. Thus, it can be assumed that the fact that the emotional value was higher in SC, was because this chain provides a more "intimate" experience to the consumer or more "individualised", unlike establishments belonging to LC, which give a more "massified" experience.

Additionally, it is assumed that the fact that in LG the functional value was higher compared to the SC, was due to the fact that LC has economies of scale, and thus, manage to offer a greater variety of products at a lower price, and, given that, the functional value represents the cognitive or financial reward that the consumer gains with the product or service (Yuan & Wu, 2008), it is natural that consumers are more satisfied with the price/quality of the products offered by this chain.

Regarding the unsupported hypotheses that included the functional value, a majority is justified by the fact that the respondents considered that in some way, the benefits attributed to the establishments themselves, inherent to the experiences under study, were no longer than a reward for what they paid, as happened in other studies (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013; Yuan & Wu, 2008). On the other hand, inherent in the think perception, it did not have a significant positive impact on the emotional value due to the frequent visits of the respondents to fast food restaurants. Therefore, customers may not need to follow the communication strategies of the brands, as they visit them very regularly (Nadiri & Gunay, 2013). Additionally, it is also mentioned that the unsupported hypotheses, mainly those inherent to the act perception, should be assessed with the help of other measurement tools, such as through interviews or focus groups, to understand these better.

It is believed that for large restaurant chains, sensory perception is the most important strategic experiential module in creating experiential value for consumers. However, in addition to this, the quality of service, the related perception and the feel perception are also important factors when a large restaurant chain wants to implement experiential marketing strategies to achieve consumer satisfaction and, consequently, a positive post-purchase behaviour.

In the same logic, it is believed that for small restaurant chains service quality be the critical element in creating experiential value for customers. However, the sense perception and the relate perception are also important factors when a small restaurant chain wants to implement experiential marketing strategies to achieve consumer satisfaction and, consequently, positive post-purchase behaviour.

As for the study's theoretical and practical implications, these also require some interpretation, from the point of view of their contributions to the literature and the restaurant's sector.

From a theoretical point of view, the results of this investigation support the theory that experiential marketing practices and service quality lead to customer satisfaction through experiential value, and customer satisfaction induces positive post-purchase behaviour. However, no studies have been identified in the literature so far that analysed these relationships and verified whether there were statistically significant differences between the respondents' responses depending on the group belonging to the service in question. Thus, this study can serve as a basis for future studies on the possible differences in the strategic experiential modules and the

perception of quality, which will affect and differentiate the remaining relationships between variables.

From a practical point of view, this study helps managers implement appropriate strategies according to their type of establishment, to prepare and design operational processes and physical environments to satisfy their customers. In Portugal, some more "traditional" managers are not yet very familiar with this concept of experiential marketing, therefore not knowing the impact and respective benefits that this type of marketing can bring to an organisation. Consequently, some managers should stop assuming that their customers are only rational and make decisions based on the product's functional resources, such as quality and price, since this assumption is not entirely valid nowadays.

Lastly, and not impeding the concern that had to be had for scientific and methodological rigour during the development of this investigation, this study, like the nature of many other studies, has some limitations. These are disclosed below, along with suggestions for future research.

Inherent in the structural model, it should be noted that the current study had some multicollinearity problems, which suggests that in future investigations it would be interesting to turn experiential marketing into a second-order construct, in order to avoid these problems. The second limitation of this study was due to the fact that some proposed relationships were not supported, without any apparent justification. To this end, it is suggested that in another study it would be equally relevant to complement the results obtained, using other measurement tools, such as, for example, through interviews or focus groups, to understand the relationship better or not between the variables under study.

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